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C O N F I D E N T I A L LUSAKA 001154

STATE FOR AF/S AND INR/AF

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ZA](#) [CG](#)

SUBJECT: ZAMBIA: RWANDA IS THE KEY TO RESOLVING THE DRC  
CRISIS

Classified By: Ambassador Donald E. Booth, reason 1.4, b/d.

¶1. (C) Zambian Foreign Minister Pande told Ambassador December 9 that Rwanda was a critical part of resolving the DRC crisis in the Kivus. Although Rwanda has denied involvement, it is clear, according to Pande, that Rwanda has an important role in the crisis and that role should be further explored by Special Envoy Obasanjo, whom the Great Lakes and African Union (AU) groupings see as "a facilitator." As AU Chair of the Peace and Security Committee this month, Zambia was urging him to do so. The Government of Zambia (GRZ) supports the ongoing DRC-FDLR talks for a peaceful resolution, but doubts they will come to anything without Rwandan involvement. Pande scoffed at Rwanda's claim that it was threatened by militias in DRC.

¶2. (C) Pande said FDLR leader Nkunde is the main culprit in the crisis, having agreed to integrate his rebels into the Congolese forces to become commander of the eastern regions and then not following through. The Congolese forces then mistakenly tried but failed to disarm them forcefully. The GRZ is frustrated that no one seems to know what Nkunde wants, as he was offered a commander position but then failed to assume it. Pande said the situation is complicated by the mining potential of the area, implying that some have commercial interests that impede a peaceful solution.

¶3. (C) The Ambassador noted that the USG welcomes talks between DRC and Rwanda and urges the FDLR to disarm and return to Rwanda where there are reception centers for their reintegration into society. The Ambassador conveyed USG concern that genocidaires among the FDLR may have entered Zambian territory. Pande claimed to be unaware of any such reports but assured the Ambassador that any such suspects found would be "handed over" as Zambia had done in the past.

BOOTH